

Literary and Cultural Disability Studies: An Exploration
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Lecture – 9
Introduction to Module 3
Disability and the Multilingual Question

Hello, good evening all of you. This is disability and multilingualism module. Why multilingualism? Well, multilingualism is more than multiplicity of languages. It acknowledges the fact that language is more than the stuff that I speak now with my vocal cords and mouth. It is the body language, it is emotional registers, it is translingual. It is a social reality.

It is a multiplicity of narrative universes and it is more than study of the stuff that links us via communication. It is also an acknowledgement that we need a true democratic approach to language and that is possible through a multilingual approach. Regarding module details, well of all the things that I mentioned about I thought we can explore this in detail with one phenomenon in hand and I chose to do sign language.

The module unfolds like a workshop on Indian sign language and its contribution to multilingualism. Well, different speakers, different conversational modalities, rich conversation with audiences for the workshop, render sign language as a nuanced approach to language evolution, emotional poetics, gestures, connectivity and the language itself. That is how this module approaches multilingualism.

Exemplary titles in the field - there are lots of books about disability cultures. They obviously end up in our engagement with the language question, the language and culture and disability intersection. One of the books is 'Curative Violence: Rehabilitating Disability, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Korea' by Eunjung Kim. Another one is 'Signing the Body Poetic: Essays on American Sign Language Literature' by Dirksen Bauman.

This book is very good. I strongly recommend this book 'Signing the Body Poetics' because it walks us through the crux of the poetics of sign language, its structure, its foundation, its narrative universes, its deeper meaning, idiom and its bigger picture and that is one of the ways in which one can uniquely understand multilingualism for a larger argument on multilingualism.

I also recommend this book 'Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations' by Suresh Canagarajah. It is very nice book. It will open up newer vistas about talking about language through the lenses of education and culture and I also direct you to an ongoing project in the journal Review of Disability Studies, in the Disability Studies and Multilingualism section.

I co-edit this section with Dr. Sona Kazemi and it is a very useful forum for a global platform on multilingual connectivity to disability, human vulnerability, trauma, madness, structural debilities and so on. I also recommend that if you are interested you should contribute to the global forum on this topic. Thank you.